CURRENT TOPICS IN WORD AND PICTURE

Photos by American Press Association.

1.—Float in New Rochelle (N. Y.) pageant. 2.—In New York parade. 3.—A "make believe" Indian. 4 and 7.—Representing old Dutch days. 5.—Representation of Governor Leisler in New Rochelle pageant. 6.—English students in medieval costumes. 8.—Reproduction of the Half Moon, Hudson's vessel.

By CHARLES N. LURIE.

THE pageant's the thing in civic affairs nowadays.

If your city or town needs a reawakening of the civic spirit give a pageant.

If it has a centenary or a semicentenary or a bicentenary to commemorate get up a pageant.

Is there a worthy cause in your town, such as a hospital or an orphan asylum or an old folks' home, that is suffering for lack of funds? Raise money by giving a pageant.

Every city's doing it—yours might as well be in the municipal swim. Not to know what a pageant is means to be unknown in the world of cities.

What a Pageant Does.

The pageant is interesting, instructive, entertaining and distinctly worth while. It brings before the modern populace of a city or town, by means of visual and oral representation, the past of the community in which its worthy citizens take pride. Before the mind's eye it calls up those pictures of the past in which history is summed up. Garbed in the costumes of the long gone days, the actors in the pageant summon from the past the shades of their ancestors, who strove to upbuild their dwelling place. Whatever there is of interest and value in the town annals is dug up for reproduction that the present day population may see how their forebears lived and moved and had their being. The pages whereon are written the focal points in the town's history are read aloud in letters of human bodies and historic costumes and memorable scenes.

To the young especially the pageant serves a useful purpose in arousing that sense of civic pride and duty which is one of the elements of good citizenship. Before the boys and girls of the town are presented living pictures of patriotism and suffering and endurance and achievement.

Good to Look Backward.

It is good for a city or town, as it is good for an individual, to cast a long look down the backward trail, to reenact the scenes of the past, to read therein the story of the development of life. Most towns have histories of which they are proud. Eminent citizens of various sorts have played their parts on their stages and, dying, have left the tales of their achievements as part of the towns' heritages. In them may be found hints and suggestions for the staging of scenes in a town's pageant. Of course more and richer material is found in the historical events in which more of the citizens were joined.

How much history must a city or town have before it may indulge in a pageant? That is a hard question. In the eastern sections of the United States, which were settled earlier by the white men than the others, virtually every sizeable town has its interesting history. But even the younger sisters of the west may find enough of local attraction in the tales of their earlier and later years to warrant their decking themselves out in the robes and adornments of the pageant.

Before the city there was the town, and before the town came the village, and this in turn was preceded by the hamlet. Each has its story of settlement, progress and development, its "characters" who may be represented, its visits from men of fame, its story of the establishment and growth of industry.

Lucky the town that has some distinctive feature in its history about which a pageant may be grouped! An eastern coast town may revert to the palmy days of the fisheries or the taking of the great whales or it may recall with pride the visit or Lafayette or, perchance, the night of nights when Washington rested there for a few hours. The middle states town or city has the story of the coming of the railroad, or the digging of the canal whereby the town's wealth was augmented, or the recollection of a great debate by two of the political giants of the middle years of the nineteenth century. The west and northwest can bring forth for local and general inspection the ever interesting tale of the finding of gold or silver or copper.

And so it goes all down the line. It's a poor city or town that can't produce some central idea around which it may build its pageant.

The pageant idea, started in England about eight years ago, is spreading rapidly in England and the United States and other countries. Of course Great Britain has a great advantage in this respect over the United States. The annals of the oldest of American cities and towns date back at most a beggarly 300 years—hardly enough in English eyes to give it the right to call itself aged or to provide proper historic pageantry stuff.

But American cities have pageantry materials which English cities lack. The Danish invader is not so picturesque a figure as the American Indian aborigine, and even the knight in his shining armor "has nothing on" Davy Crockett in his coonskin cap. The battleax and long bow are not intrinsically more interesting than the long rifle of the backwoodsman. England and France and Germany may reproduce in their pageants the quaint strains of the old time folk dances, but the warwhoop of the Indian sounds better in a pageant.

It should be understood that the pageant as it is staged today is not for the few. There are not a few actors, robing themselves and declaiming for the delight and benefit of their admiring friends and neighbors. Oh, indeed, no! The best pageant is the one in which the greatest numbers take part. The more you can get your fellow townsmen interested and willing to share in the work and trouble the more successful will your show be.

John D's Son-in-law Is the First Aerial Commuter

THERE'S much to be said in favor of the "fly to your business" idea invented and practiced by Harold F. McCormick of Chicago. The millennium of the commuter, for instance, will come when he can hop aboard his aeroplane or hydroaeroplane and "pass up" the daily discomforts of the ride from and to Suburbia. True, he'll miss his morning and evening rubber of whist or game of chess or checkers, but he'll get in compensation speedier transportation and purer air. He won't have to buy his monthly commutation ticket. All he'll have to do is buy or rent his flying machine and hire a man to run it.

We poor city and town dwellers who depend on elevated trains, subway and trolley cars for our daily transportation and we farmers who have to walk seven miles into town when Old Dobbin develops stringhalt or the buggy spring breaks may also see in the flying machine a way of salvation. "Not yet, but soon," as Mr. Harriman's famous saying had it.

But in the meantime Harold F. McCormick's air and water boat carries him gayly between his office on Michigan boulevard, Chicago, and his sumptuous home at Lake Forest, Ill. As the hydroaeroplane flies the distance is thirty miles, and the machine makes it in about twenty-eight minutes. When it settles gently down on the surface of Lake Michigan and transforms itself from a flying machine into a boat it travels along the surface of the water at fifty miles an hour. That's just about as fast as the fastest motorboats shoot when they send up their blinding waves of spray on each side.

It was on the cards that Mr. McCormick would do something novel in the way of aeronautics. Ever since the Wrights blazed the sky trail, back in 1908, he has been keenly interested in aviation. Of course he was in a position to take much financial stock in the new science or sport, for what are thousands or hundreds of thousands or even millions to a man who is head of a big harvester company and a son-in-law of John D. Rockefeller? So he plunged right into aviation without regard to expense. Among other good deeds in the name of the advancement of flying, he backed the first big air meet in Chicago. As far back as 1911—which is pretty far back as the history of aviation goes—Mr. McCormick was credited with the invention of a flying machine that actually flew. He has inventive genius inherited by the man who made his enormous pile in agricultural machinery.

No wonder Harold F. McCormick is the first aerial commuter. It is recorded, however, that with all his interest in flying he made only very few flights before deciding to drop the railroad train and the automobile for daily traveling. That showed, of course, a commendable consideration of the value of his own life and its worth to Mrs. McCormick and their three children.

Mrs. McCormick was Miss Edith Rockefeller before she was married to Mr. McCormick in 1895. Their first child, John Rockefeller McCormick, was born in 1897 and died in 1901, and it was his death from spinal meningitis that led his grandfather to establish the Rockefeller institute in New York in the hope that there would be discovered the germ of and a remedy for the dread disease which has robbed so many homes, rich and poor. Mrs. McCormick is the third and youngest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller. The oldest daughter, who was Miss Elizabeth Rockefeller, was married to Professor Charles A. Strong in 1889 and died in 1906. The second daughter is the wife of E. Parmalee Prentice. The only son is John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

For several years Mrs. McCormick has been recognized as a social leader in Chicago, just as her husband is considered one of the big men of the business city. Their home at Lake Forest, Ill., from and to which Mr. McCormick plans flying every day when the weather permits, is one of the finest and most costly country homes in America. It cost more than $2,500,000.

At the Lake Forest home Mr. McCormick has had constructed a garage for his flying boat. There the machine is housed when not in use. At the city end of the trip the hydroaeroplane sails up to or alights at a similar landing place provided by the city at Grant park. Mr. McCormick's "chauffeur" is C. C. Witmer.

ARTHUR J. BRINTON.

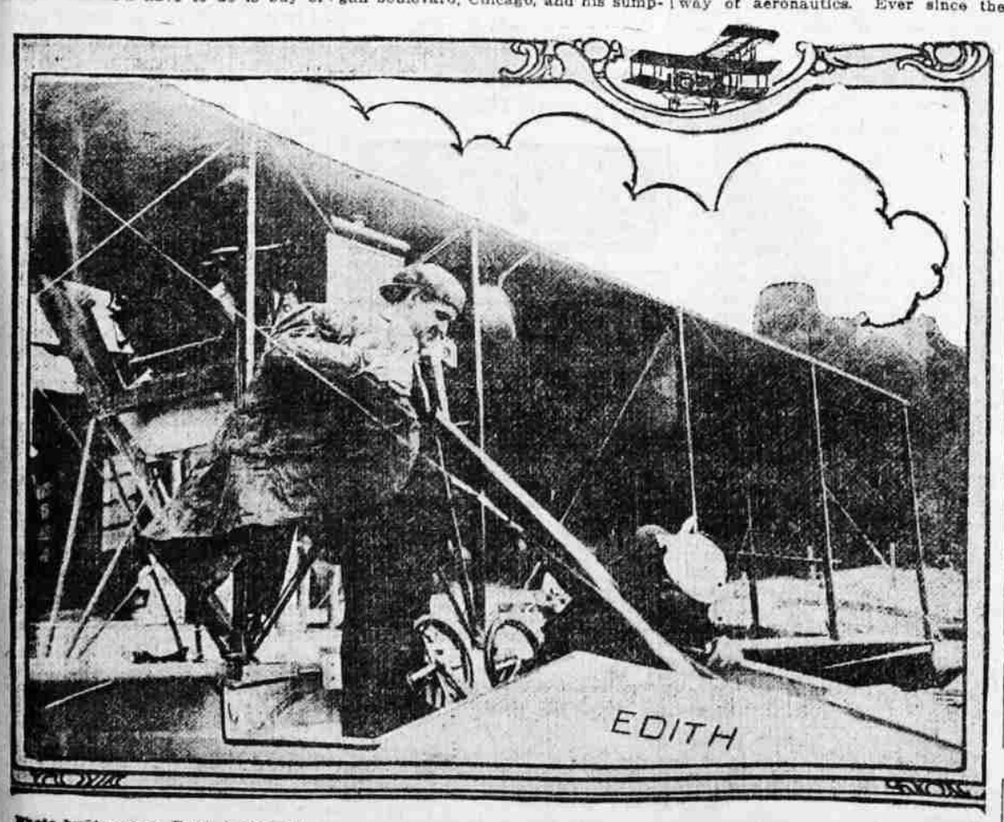

Photo by American Press Association.

Harold F. McCormick Starting Out on an Aerial Commutation Trip

Ability Plus Money Makes Penfield a Diplomat

SOME folks say an American diplomat must have money in order to maintain the dignity of the American nation abroad. Others believe that money, while agreeable and soothing to the possessor and those with whom he comes into contact, should be subordinated to ability. The two opinions embrace about everything there is to be said of the qualifications of an ambassador or a minister plenipotentiary. When, therefore, the president sends to an important post a man who has both money—much money—and ability the country generally claps its hands in approval.

That's the case of Frederic Courtland Penfield, who went to Vienna not long ago to represent the United States near the court of his apostolic majesty the emperor of Austria-Hungary, king of Bohemia, king of Jerusalem, etc.

Mr. Penfield has some money and much ability. His wife has much money and also much ability. Also they are adherents of the Roman Catholic faith, to which belong the Austro-Hungarian ruler and the members of his court. Several years ago Mrs. Penfield was decorated by the pope for her numerous charities, and the favor of the holy father has done much to insure for the Penfields a favorable reception at the court of Vienna.

Mrs. Penfield has borne that name since 1908, when she was married to the diplomat-author. Before that time her name was Anna M. Weightman Walker, and she was known to the public as one of the richest women in America. Some writers say Mrs. Hetty Green has more money than Mrs. Penfield, and others put Mrs. Sage or Mrs. Harriman ahead of the others in the financial list. No one knows just how much money Mrs. Penfield has. Her fortune has been estimated at various times to amount to between $30,000,000 and $100,000,000. Probably $50,000,000 would be as close a guess as any. She inherited the money from her father, a drug manufacturer.

Mr. Penfield was known to the public for many years before he added to his titles that of husband of one of America's wealthiest women. His start in life was not financially auspicious, but he managed to get a good education and entered newspaper work in Hartford, Conn. He is a native of Connecticut.

After five years of journalistic work he was appointed vice consul in London by President Cleveland in 1885. From 1893 to 1897 he was diplomatic agent and consul general to Egypt, ranking as a minister resident, and it is said that his knowledge of modern Egypt is at least as extensive as that of any other American. He has written one book and numerous articles dealing with the land of the khedive and one book, titled "East of Suez," in which he embodies some of the results of his extensive travels in Africa, India, China and Japan.

BRUCE K. GORDON.

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Mr. and Mrs. Frederic Courtland Penfield.